Three die, 14 hurt as seven vehicles collide in fog

By Our Correspondent

SAHIWAL, Dec 31: Three people were killed and 14 sustained serious injuries on Thursday afternoon in a chain collision between seven vehicles on the Sahiwal-Multan section of the GT Road due to poor visibility on account of fog.

Reportedly, a car (GTB-1444) carrying Kasur District Bar vice-president Syed Kausar Sherazi collided with a trailer (LS-7872) parked on the GT Road.

Five vehicles following the car at a narrow margin — a truck (DNB-5173), a passenger wagon (LPT-8612), a passenger bus (LPT-7785), a Toyota pick-up (QAB-3899) carrying poultry birds and a Suzuki Mehran — collided in a chain.

As a result, advocate Sherazi, his gunman Muzammil Hussain, a police constable escorting Mr Sherazi and driver Ali Sher were killed on the spot.

Fourteen passengers who reportedly sustained serious injuries were rushed to the DHQ Hospital, Sahiwal.

They were identified as: Muhammad Alam, Razaq, Shah Din Murid Hussain, Gulzar Khan, Akhtar Ismail, Sanwal, Sajjad Ali and Saleem.

All vehicles were coming to Sahiwal.

In two accidents due to heavy fog, five people were injured. A passenger wagon (LPT-2322), hit a trailer (GLT-4609), leaving . three of its passengers injured.

On the GT Road near Qadirabad, a Sadiqabad-bound bus of New Khan Service collided with a sugar cane trolley. The bus was hit by another company bus from behind. Luckily, none was killed except injuries to two persons.

In Faisalabad, a passenger was killed and 19 others sustained multiple injuries in a road accident on the Faisalabad-Sargodha Road due to fog on Thursday.

The accident took place when a bus bound for Chiniot collided head on with a speeding bus coming from the opposite direction near Pul Dangero. The dead passengers could not be identified.

The injured were rushed to the local Allied Hospital for medical aid where the condition of Nadeem Ahmed, Hameed Akhtar, and Mst Khadija was stated to be serious.

Wheat found stolen from bags in stock

By Our Correspondent

MULTAN, Dec 31: The Khidmat Committee of Kehror Pucca town raided a PASSCO godown and found the entire wheat stock below the weight mentioned on papers.

KC chairman Rana Buland Sher Khan told newsmen on Thursday that three to four kg wheat had been removed from each bag.

TRADERS' PROTEST: Local timber market traders have strongly opposed the re-auctioning of already-allotted shops by the Multan Development Authority and appealed to Punjab chief minister to intervene into the matter.

Presiding over an emergency meeting of the Markazi Anjuman Tajiran, Timber Market, Shaikh Muhammad Akram said on Thursday that the market was still deprived of goods stand, parking site, lavatories, open spaces and cold storage because the MDA did not complete development works as per agreement although the allottess have paid development charges.

He further said that the MDA was also auctioning the space earmarked for water-disposal system besides re-auctioning the already-allotted shops which caused unrest among traders.

FARM LOANS: The Punjab Provincial Cooperative Bank has decided to advance farm loans of Rs 2,660 million by July 31, 1999.

The bank has already lent Rs 538.3 million for the Rabi crop, 1998-99, through cooperative societies.

Official sources said that bank had recovered 99.13 per cent of its Rabi loans for 1997-98 while Rs 540.8 million had so far been recovered out of the Kharif-98 loan which was 30 per cent of the total loan.

Sources said that cotton purchase was very slow due to cautious buying by the APTMA. As a result, farmers were unable to repay loans.

DATELINE BAHAWALPUR

Majeed Gill

A library for children

A CHILDREN's library has been established in Bahawalpur. It was inaugurated by Punjab Minister for Education Brig (Retd) Zulfiqar Ali Dhillon.

The library has been set up on the premises of Bahawalpur's oldest and only library — the State Library. The Children's library complex was constructed at a cost of over Rs one million some time back, but it could not be formally inaugurated earlier.

Attratively designed, the library has a collection of valuable books and other reading material meant for children. It has also different toys and playgames. It has also been equipped with audo/ video cassette facilities, and the Life Time Encyclopaedia is also available.

The Punjab minister expressed his pleasure over the design of the State Library built by the late Nawab Muhammad Sadiq Khan Abbasi. He asked the deputy commissioner to prepare a plan for the library's renovation and announced a grnat of Rs 500,000 for the children's library.

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ENCROACHMENTS in various bazars and roads comprise a continuous nuisance for the citizens. A few months back the district administration with the cooperation of the local trading community had launched a massive operation against the removal of encroachments and illegal construction at the roads and main bazars.

With the passage of time, these encroachments have now again cropped up, creating a hurdle in the smooth flow of traffic and difficulties for pedestrians, particularly women folk in the small congested bazaars of the city.

At the time of the launching of the operation, representatives from cross-section of society at a gathering convened by the deputy commissioner had suggested that the removal of encroachments and other unlawful constructions should be a continuous process and there should be a constant check by the traffic police and the municipal corporation. But, this was not done with the result that now the city is again full of encroachments.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE unscheduled and frequent loadshedding in the city and suburbs is creating hardships not only for the people but for industrial concerns as well.

Bahawalpur is a cotton growing area, which has hundreds of ginning factories and oil mills. With the unscheduled shutdown of power, production in the ginning factories is adversely affected. Moreover, some of the big industrial units located in the small industrial estates are also facing power problems.

The feeling is that if loadshedding is unavoidable, a proper schedule should be announced which takes into account the need of industrial and commercial concerns.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WITH the advent of Ramazan, prices of all essential commodities have shot up despite warnings by the local price control committee headed by the deputy commissioner.

There is no let-up by the shopkeepers who are overcharging in the city without any fear. Even the supply of eggs to the city has been suspended by the owners of the poultry farms. The price of beef has also increased.

In a meeting of the district price control committee, an assurance was held out by the traders' representative that prices will be kept at a reasonable level, but that is not honoured. Now it is for the administration to enforce its decisions.

Kidnapped businessman not yet recovered

By Our Correspondent

MIANWALI, Dec 31: A businessman-cum-contractor of the main bazaar who was kidnapped for ransom by some proclaimed offenders three days back has so far not been released.

When contacted, Haji Ghulam Qadar's relatives alleged that the same gang had kidnapped people in the past and released them after getting ransom.

They said the so-called local Anjuman Tajran had not taken any notice of the kidnapping of their colleague. Instead they had advised his relatives to pay the ransom and get the man released from the outlaws' custody.

It is to be mentioned here that Haji Qadir's driver had revealed the identity of the kidnappers.

The same gang had killed a young man, Baloch, a few days ago.

The business community and the general public have demanded the Punjab government to seek help from the military if it wanted to eliminate these wanted men because police had failed to round them up.

Show-cause notices to 60 teachers

By Our Correspondent

SHEIKHUPURA, Dec 31: The district education officer elementary (women) has issued show-cause notices to 60 teachers who were found absent from duty during raids by her.

While talking a newsmen here on Thursday, the education officer said these teachers were getting salaries without performing their duties. She said if they failed to give satisfactory reasons about their absent, they would be dismissed from service.

She has also directed the other teachers to be punctual.

CRUSHED: A man was crushed to death under the wheels of his own tractor near Qila Sattar Shah on Thursday.

Tahir was going on a tractor. As he reached near his house, a wagon coming from the opposite side collided with his tractor. As a result he fell down on the ground and crushed under the wheels of his own tractor.

Factory Area police have registered a case against the absconding wagon driver.

LOADSHEDDING: Unscheduled and prolonged loadshedding of electricity and gas in and around the city has made lives of people miserable particularly during iftar and sehr. It is to be mentioned here that the Wapda chairman had announced that there would be no loadshedding during sehr and iftar.

Shopkeepers vow to resist official raids

By Our Correspondent

GUJRANWALA, Dec 31: Some 15 local trade organizations, including the Markazi Anjuman Tajran, have threatened that they will go on a strike if crackdown on shopkeepers to check prices was not stopped immediately.

Addressing a Press conference on Thursday, they protested against the district administration and police on registration of cases against them under MPO-16.

Trade organization leaders, including Markazi Anjuman Tajran President Dr Mahmood Ahmad, alleged that the police were extorting money from the business community following the crackdown.

They demanded that the chief minister should take notice of the situation immediately, and the matter should be probed by a judge of the Lahore High Court.

THREE KILLED: Three people were killed and six others were injured in separate road accidents in and around the city on Thursday.

Usman, 10, of Sadhoki was crushed by a truck (GAK-8887) on the GT Road. He died on the spot.

In another incident, seven-year-old Irfan of Kasowal was killed while six others sustained injuries when a tractor-trolley hit a tonga on which the victims were riding on Gondlanwala Road.

The injured people were admitted to the local Civil Hospital in critical condition.

Mahmood Javed, 50, of Satellite Town, was knocked down by a speeding vehicle near the overhead bridge.

Police have registered cases and are investigating.

STERN ACTION: The divisional administration has warned that stern action will be taken against all those who will be found indulging in immoral activities on the new-year eve.

The divisional commissioner said on Thursday necessary instructions had already been issued to the district administration and police asking them not to allow any group or party to hold a function in a hotel, club or a public place regarding the new year.

He said the police had also been ordered to arrest all those who would violate the law.

TORTURED: A councillor and his men were tortured and humiliated by another councillor and accomplices in Sodara Town on Wednesday night.

It is reported that councillor Sahibzada Ziaun Noor and his men had launched a campaign against the drug menace which was opposed by councillor Shaukat Ali Awan and his supporters.

Awan and accomplices attacked Noor and his men when they were on their way after offering traveeh. They beat them up with clubs and iron bars and escaped while firing.

Sodara police are investigating the matter.

GHEE PRICE: The divisional administration has fixed the ghee price at Rs 51 per kg in Ramazan bazaars and Rs 53 per kg in the open market.

The decision was taken at a meeting held here on Thursday with the divisional commissioner in the chair.

The meeting also reviewed the flour supply position.

DEMOLISHED: Five people stormed into the Government Girls Middle School, Ghakkhar Town, and demolished classrooms to grab the school land on Thursday.

When Headmistress Ruqia Khanum protested, Zafar and accomplices escaped while firing in the air and threatening with dire consequences.

Ghakkhar police have registered a case against the accused and are investigating.

CASE REGISTERED: Tetley Aali police registered a case against 20 persons for ransacking the house of their rival on Wednesday night.

It is reported that Zafarullah along with 19 accomplices entered the house of Sadaqat Ali of Bhadey village and ransacked the house. They beat up Sadaqat's mother Rasulan Bibi. They also took away cash, jewellery and other valuables from the house.

STRANGLED: A young man, Munawwar Husain, 23, was strangled to death reportedly by his rival, Muhammad Sharif, over a monetary dispute in Mandiala Tega, Wahando, on Wednesday night.

Wahando police have registered a case and are investigating.

ARRESTED: Baghbanpura police arrested two youths, Shehzad and Amanullah, for possessing fake currency notes here on Wednesday night.

Newly-born dies due to 'paramedics negligence'

By Our Correspondent

SARGODHA, Dec 31: A newly-born died due to negligence of the paramedical staff and non-availability of a lady doctor in the emergency ward of the Government Maula Bakhsh Hospital here on Wednesday night.

According to details, when Kalsoom Bibi, wife of labourer Muhammad Ashraf, was brought to the hospital, no lady doctor was available in the emergency ward. The paramedical staff conducted the delivery case. The newly-born baby slipped from the hands of a nurse and fell down from the table. He sustained serious wounds and was rushed to the nearby DHQ Hospital where he died.

Ashraf has demanded registration of a murder case against the guilty persons, including the medical officer.

ARRESTED: More than 200 shopkeepers were booked by the administration for overcharging during the first decade of Ramazan in Sargodha district, but neither the price hike was checked nor the frequent supply of essential goods ensured.

The administration had set up four fair price shops in the city and claimed that atta, ghee, gram, pulses and other eatables were being provided to citizens at subsidized rate.

But in the market, most of the commodities have been removed from sale by shopkeepers apprehending raids by the administration.

The prices of fruits and vegetables have also gone up.

Rally against cut in MBBS seats

By Our Correspondent

MULTAN, Dec 31: Students seeking admission to MBBS classes staged a demonstration in front of newspaper offices on Thursday in protest against reducing seats in medical colleges from 1,445 to 1,399.

They said some 1,445 seats had been declared for all the medical colleges, but the entry test results showed selection of 1,399 candidates which showed that the government had reduced the number of seats to oblige its favourites.

They said the chief minister had categorically stated that the quota system had been ended, but the bureaucracy had kept 46 seats reserved unlawfully.

The protesting students demanded a probe into the matter.

AWAM EXPRESS: The Karachi bound 14-down Awam Express narrowly escaped a major accident when coupling of the last bogie broke down due to a jerk.

According to details, as the Awam Express reached a level crossing of the industrial estate, the driver found it open and stopped the train. After getting a clearance, when the driver moved the train forward, the coupling of the last bogie broke down and the train moved forward leaving the bogie on the track. The guard immediately pulled emergency brakes.

Later the mechanical staff repaired the coupling.

PROBE ENDS: Muzaffargarh magistrate GM Riaz Khan has completed the judicial probe into manhandling of an assistant director public relations and a journalist by police.

In his report submitted to the deputy commissioner, the inquiry officer held ASI Allah Bakhsh Thaheem and two constables, Muzaffar Husain and Ghulam Husain, responsible for subjecting them to torture and keeping them in lock-up for two hours.

It may be recalled that ADPR Mumtaz Ahmad Khan and journalist Naeem Ahmad Baluch had gone to the city police station, Muzaffargarh, to ask about the arrest of Naeem's brother where the ASI misbehaved them. On their protest, the ASI and two constables gave them severe beating and locked them up.

They were got released by the Muzaffargarh deputy commissioner who also ordered an inquiry into the matter.

The Muzaffargarh SP has suspended the services of the three police officials and transferred them to the police lines.

Both the ADPR and the journalist were admitted to hospital.

A case was also registered against policemen.

FARM ENGINEERING: The Director-General (field), Agriculture, Punjab, has been accused of wasting funds to the tune of Rs 450 million allocated for the repair of 300 bulldozers.

The allegation was levelled at a joint meeting of all trade unions of the Agriculture department held here on Wednesday with Sohnay Khan in the chair.

The meeting said the amount was sufficient to purchase 135 new bulldozers but the DG got sanctioned funds of Rs 450 million for the repair of 300 bulldozers and purchased iron of Rs 400 million at the rate of Rs 90 per kg (while market rate was Rs 15) to manufacture chains of bulldozers.

They claimed that not a single chain had been manufactured as the 300 bulldozers were still idle.

Gujrat ZC chief, deputies take oath

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE, Dec 31: Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi says the Gujrat District Council, following in the footsteps of the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore, will recover its lands under illegal occupation of land grabbers and sell them to generate funds for development activities. He said while addressing a ceremony at which he administered oath to the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Gujrat District Council on Thursday. The speaker directed the district council members to supervise the development activities in their respective areas and ensure that the people had no complaints whatsoever.

Chaurdhry Pervaiz Elahi urged the elected representatives to serve as a link between the people and the administration and bridge the gap between the two. He said the administration should also help the elected representatives solve people's problems.

While addressing a meeting of the chairmen of the zakat committees, the speaker said that zakat funds worth Rs 10 million would be distributed among the poor people of Gujrat district before Eid.

Loadshedding schedule violation continues

By Our Correspondent

TOBA TEK SINGH, Dec 31: The violation of electricity loadshedding schedule continued on Wednesday night and Thursday in the city and rural areas by the Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO).

Local business circles have condemned the shutdowns which had unsettled their business.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Kissan Committee president Chaudhry Fateh Muhammad and Kissan Bachao Tehrik leaders Mehr Rab Nawaz Dadoana advocate have also issued statements, condemning the FESCO for prolonged switch-offs, affecting farmers who irrigated their fields through tubewells.

MSF CHARGE: The Muslim Students Federation, city unit, in an emergent meeting on Wednesday condemned the principal of the Government Municipal Degree College for allegedly victimizing the students belonging to the organization.

Through a resolution, it said that the principal had forcibly restrained the MSF from holding Nifaz-i-Shariah conference on the college premises last week and now he was taking illegal actions against those MSF workers who had lodged complaints against him.

It also claimed that the principal was patronising an opponent student organization.

USC STORE: The additional deputy commissioner (general) and assistant commissioner raided on Thursday the local utility store and found that different commodities were being sold at more than the market prices.

They directed the staff to stop the sale of ghee, dates, pulses and sugar with immediate effect.

DIES: Widow of late former president of the district press club, TT Singh, Ismail Saqi died here on Thursday after protracted illness.

She was buried in the central graveyard of the city.

Truck falls into Head Rasool

By Our Correspondent

CHAKWAL, Dec 31: Two people were killed when a truck fell into Head Rasool on Thursday.

The truck was going to Mandi Bahauddin from Choa Saidan Shah. Due to heavy fog, the visibility was very poor. The driver lost control over the vehicle and it fell into the Head Rasool canal. Driver Muhammad Khalid, a resident of Ratoocha village, and conductor Muhammad Asif, a resident of Khewra, drowned in the water.

CHAKWAL MC: The Chakwal Municipal Committee has decided to increase the rates of various taxes of the municipality to raise its income.

It is learnt that the octroi tax rate will be enhanced by 50 per cent while the other taxes, including water charges, will be increased from 30 per cent to 60 per cent.

The Punjab government has already given a free hand to municipal committees throughout the province to increase the existing rates. The local traders community has criticized the decision.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

☛NOTIFIED to general public and all concerned that my client has contracted to purchase from Mr Waseem Ahmed, S/o Bashir Ahmed, resident of 26/II, Saba Avenue, Phase-V (Extn), Defence Housing Authority, Karachi, an open Plot No. SL-2, 14th Street, Phase VIII, Defence Housing Authority, Karachi, measuring 2000 sqyds or thereabout, for a valuable consideration and free from all claims, charges, mortgages, liens, objections, disputes and encumbrances of whatsoever nature. Any person, bank, authority or organisation, having any objection whatsoever to the sale thereof shall notify the same to the undersigned by registered post AD and/or courier service, within five days from the date hereof, failing which claim, charge, lien, encumbrances, dispute or objection if any, shall be deemed to have been waived and the transaction of the said property shall be completed. M. Siddique, Advocate, Fl-3, Rose Garden Apts., Jehangir Kothari Road, Frere Towns, Karachi, Ph. No. 5676421. (J-72301)

☛OUR client has contracted to purchase leasehold office bearing No. B-3, Third Floor, Plot No. 15-C, 6th Zamzama Commercial Lane, Phase-V, Pakistan Defence Officers Co-operative Housing Authority, Clifton Cantonment, Karachi. Measuring 900 sq. ft. or thereabout, from Mr Naeem S/o Abdul Sattar R/o 50-A, Lalazar, Karachi, free from all claims, encumbrances, liens, charges, demands, mortgages and with full vacant possession. Any person having any claim/objection of whatsoever nature should notify same to the undersigned alongwith documentary evidence under registered A/D cover within seven days from publication of this notice, failing which claim/objection, if any, shall be deemed to have been waived and transfer of the said office shall be completed in favour of our client. Shamim Associates, 22, Saleem Avenue, Opp. Masjid Baitul Mukkarram, Block 13-B, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi (K-25914)

LAHORE

☛JHANG: Whereas Sh. Mohammad Raza Zaki Abdul Qadir Alias Mohd. Riaz s/o Sh. Maqbool Elahi resident of Alias Mohd. Riaz House No. 145/5 Block No. 3 Circular Road Faisalabad. Allottees of plots No. 18/1-C area Development Scheme Rabwah appointed Mr. Mohammad Akram s/o Hafiz Ahmed Ali resident of Moza Bukhariana Tehsil Chiniot Distt. Jhang as his general power of attorney of respect of the said plot through a deed of general power of attorney registered by the Sub-Registrar Chiniot. The said deed was registered vide entry No.91 dated. 20-2-1998. If any one may have any objection/legal rights in this regard he should furnish the same in writing to the undersigned within a fortnight from the publication of this notice. After the expiry of fortnight this Department shall not accept any responsibility whatsoever. Secretary District Housing Committee, Jhang. (PI-95216)

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Broken roads and motorists

By Wajahat Ijaz

GUJRAT, Dec 31: Some wise men have rightly said that if you want to assess the economy of a country, then do not see luxury vehicles plying on its roads but see the condition of tracks they move on.

They saying is true in case of Pakistan which does have luxury vehicles but lacks quality roads and highways, mainly for want of funds and, to some extent, poor planning and corruption.

Broken roads of Gujrat city and adjoining localities have virtually become unmotorable. The worst areas are New Bus Stand, Old Bus Stand Road, Dinga Road, Mungowal Road, Sargodha Road, Bhimber Road, Ramtalai Road, and Karrianwala Road.

The Dinga Road reportedly showed potholes immediately after its opening because of alleged use of sub-standard material in its construction.

The Punjab Highways Department and the Municipal Committee who are responsible for roads show no interest in repairing the damage.

About two kilometres long up track of the GT Road between Lalamusa and Gujrat, from Verowal to Chokory Nullah, is in bad shape for the last six years.

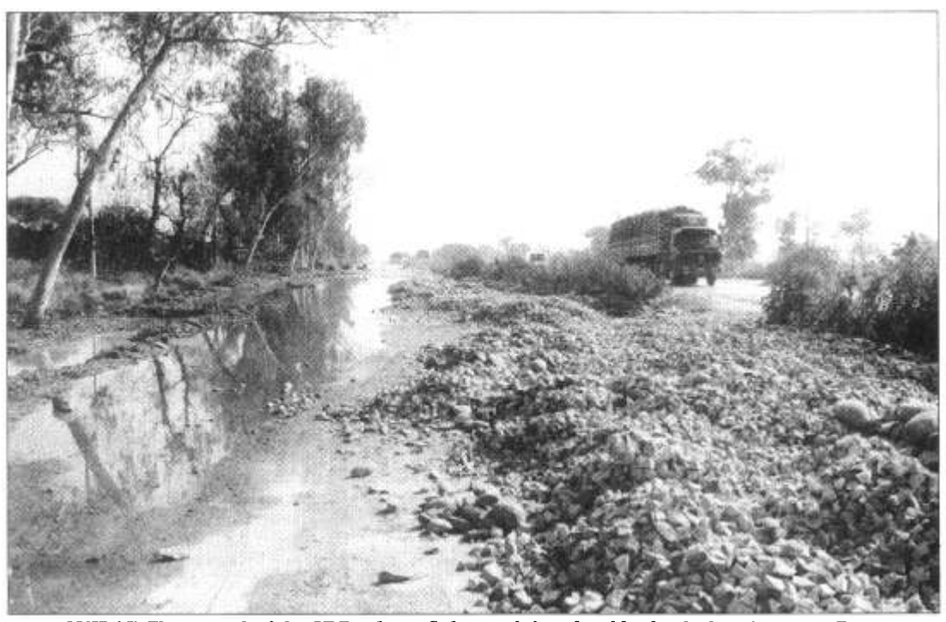
The affected area remains flooded with sewage due to defective planning by the Public Health Engineering Department. Motorists, specially those using the track daily, face untold hardships and sustain huge financial losses in shape of wear and tear of their vehicles.

At present the track is not motorable and forces motorists to use the down lane for two kilometres. However, the life is not safe on this track either because heavy rush of vehicles results in collisions. Especially, the point where a vehicle enters the up track has become a death trap.

According to an estimate, over a dozen people have died and 34 sustained critical injuries during the last six years in collisions between vehicles. The down lane on this section is highly dangerous for those who use two-wheelers.

After several appeals by citizens and scores of protest rallies by the area people, some three months ago a senior official of the National Highway Authority visited the site and directed the department to start the repair.

The contractor who has started work is executing it at a snail's pace. A couple of weeks ago this correspondent saw only four labourers spreading stone on the track. If this pace is maintained, the track will hopefully be re-carpeted in next six years.



GUJRAT: The up track of the GT Road near Lalamusa is in a shambles for the last six years.—Dawn